

Mr. *ADDISON*'s
DISSERTATION
ON THE
Roman POETS.

Price One Shilling.

LONDON,

Printed by B. CURRIE, in Fleet-Street.

AUTHORS *Names.*

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| I. Virgil. | IX. Plautus. |
| II. Lucretius. | X. Terence. |
| III. Ovid. | XI. Seneca. |
| IV. Statius. | XII. Martial. |
| V. Lucan. | XIII. Catullus. |
| VI. Claudian. | XIV. Tibullus. |
| VII. Horace. | XV. Propertius. |
| VIII. Juvenal. | |

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A
DISSERTATION

Upon the most celebrated
Roman POETS.

Written originally in LATIN

BY

Joseph Addison, Esq;

Made ENGLISH by
CHRISTOPHER HAYES, Esq;



L O N D O N,
Printed for E. CURLL in Fleet-street.
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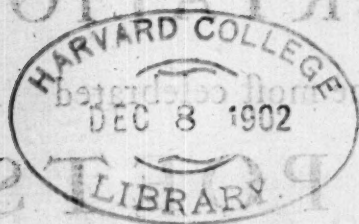
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Subscription fund of 1902.

BY

Joseph Addison, Esq.

Made English by

CHRISTOPHER HAYES, Esq.



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Printed for E. Curll in Fleet-street.

M D C C X V I I



DISSERTATIO
DE
INSIGNIORIBUS
ROMANORUM
POETIS.



OMNIUM in re Poetica maxime inclaruerunt Romani, & Romanorum VIRGILIUS: Optimæ quæque Regulæ huic Arti

B

in-

inservientes non tam Criticorum
Præceptis quam MARONIS exem-
plo sunt depromendæ : Ut ideo de
reliquis Heroici Carminis Scripto-
ribus, recte statuamus Virtutes &
Vitia quæ apud singulos occurrunt,
lectioni conferamus *Virgilianæ* ; qui,
si ullibi defecerit *Bucolicis*, nonnun-
quam puriorem immiscuit Styli ele-
gantiam quam quæ *Pastoribus* con-
veniat, & sæpe grandior sonat Car-
minum Majestas quam quæ tenui
avenæ consona videatur : Apud
quemlibet *Georgicorum* librum ini-
mitabili quadam Sermonis Elean-
tia Res rusticæ explicantur, sed ul-
timus de *Apum Natura* valde præter
cæteros animum delectat ; ubi dum
in

in tenui Argumento procedit Poema, solennem quandam Sententiarum & Verborum Pompam studiose affectet Poeta; Apum ideo Opera *Cyclopum* affimulat Laboribus, nec majori Carminum tumultu ÆNEÆ & TURNI recitat Certamina, quam hæc Infectorum Turmas inter sese depræliantes. Ubique exiguæ Reipublicæ Duces, Populi, Studia, Mores, & tenue illud Imperium quod intra Alvearii Angustias exercetur, venusta nescio qua Carminis Magnificencia exprimuntur: Quin hoc certe in toto Opere præcipue occurrit admirandum, quomodo dum Plantationis, Pastionis, & Agriculturæ curas

4 *Dissertatio de Insignioribus*

exequitur Poeta, omiſſis uſitatoribus loquendi formulis, materiæ tam incultæ locutionem Poeticam accommodaret, quomodo ignobiliori depreſſus Argumento nunquam ad Stylum Plebeium Orationem demiferat; ſed tanta undique apparet Locutionum vis, ut multi (quamvis temere) *Georgicos* etiam *Æneidi* prætuliffe non dubitarint; ſed in hoc Opere, per Argumentum, non licuit alias Poëſeos Partes præſtitiffe quam Styli & Deſcriptionum Elegantiam. Quod ad utrumque attinet, illud ſibi proprium ſemper vendicat MARONIS Pagina, ut quicquid exprimat mira quadam Dulcedine animum ingrediatur, & quod

quod describat melius quam si Oculis subjiciatur, tanquam præsens intueamur.

In Styli puritate proxime accedit L U C R E T I U S, cujus Dictio, si obsoletæ aliquando Verborum Antiquitati, & Numeris pene solutis agnoscas, illorum Palato qui *Romane* sapiunt, persuavis videatur. In Descriptionibus tamen CLAUDIANO secundus debetur Honos, qui amœnas Rerum Imagines ubique venustissima contexuit Oratione, in hoc solummodo vitiosus, quod fusius quam par est semper expatietur, eisdem Versus diversis exponat Loquendi Modis; in hac Arte sese maxime

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maxime profecisse satis noverat
CLAUDIANUS, de quacunque
 enim re fatagit, assidue semper
 quærit quæ describenda sunt, imo
 plurima sumpsit Argumenta quæ
 tota in Descriptionibus occupantur,
 ut videre est in Præfationibus, in
Idylliis, in Libris de Raptu **PRO-**
SERPINÆ, de **PHÆNICE**, **HIS-**
TRICE, **TORPEDINE**, & ple-
 risque Epigrammatum:

OVIDIUS (ut erat *Aulici In-*
 genii Homo) terso quidem & polito
 Carmine res exhibuit amatorias, in
 cæteris tamen Operibus istiusmodi
 occurrit Sermo quali in Triviis uti
 solent : Ille enim Ingenio suo con-
 fisus

fifus de operosiori Dictione elaboranda parum erat satis sollicitus: In Libro tamen *Metamorphoseos* varias optime depinxit Animalium Mutationes, dum prior paulatim exuitur Forma & nova superinducitur.

Utrumque hoc quod jam tractamus Poetis Officium non raro optime præstitit PAPINIUS, LUCANUS neutrum, cujus Dictio quanquam multum sonat inflata, nulla tamen Phraſeorum aut Epithetorum Venustate animatur, sed Orationi magis solutæ convenit quam Poeticæ, imo certe tali plerunque utitur Verborum delectu, qualem

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qualem vel Liber dedignetur Sermo. Et quanquam in Descriptionibus sæpiissime versatur, & in hujusmodi diverticula nunquam non excurrit, raro tamen, ut debet, Opus absolvit : Jam vero quod ad S T A T I U M attinet ; plurima certe composuit summis Poetarum invidenda, sed inter magnas Virtutes maxima occurrunt Vitia ; in Dictione enim Verba nimis admittit sesquipedalia, nullaque de Argumento habita ratione vana numeris miscet Tonitrua : Nec minus in Descriptionibus peccat ; nimio enim calori indulgens, dum totis viribus excellere conatur, ultra Finem tendit opus, et in tumorem excrefcit ; in utrum-

que

que hujusmodi vitium aliquando incidit CLAUDIANUS. Jam vero quoniam de VIRGILII *Æneidis* Argumento varii multa scripserunt & præclara, pauca solummodo de STATII & LUCANI Carminibus sunt advertenda; utpote quæ *Latinorum* omnium sola Epica haberi debent. De LUCANO id sæpe in Disputationem venit, an Historia qua constat *Pharsalicum* Poema, idoneum sit Heroici Carminis Argumentum. Vera ideo Heroicæ Poeseos Natura inquirenda est, quam apud Librum de Dignitate & Augmentis Scientiarum his Verbis optime exhibuit VERULAMIUS nostras. Ex quo satis patet veram

Historiam cum Epico Poemate male
convenire ; & proinde LUCANUM
quoad Argumentum maxime defe-
cisse: Quinque in illius Poemate
maxime emicant Heroes, CÆSAR,
POMPEIUS, BRUTUS, CATO,
& CICERO: Omnes fane tam
Vita insignes quam Morte luctuosi ;
quorum Virtutes (quantum licuit
per humanam Naturam) Perfectio-
ni istæ Heroicæ, quam reliqui Poe-
tæ Ducibus suis falso tribuerunt,
proxime accesserant. LUCANUS
CÆSARI undique oblatrat, POM-
PEII Partes ambitiose fovet, sed
BRUTI & CATONIS Encomia,
ob Stoicum (credo) illud Ingenium,
quod cum his habuit commune,
max-

maxime celebrat : Et plurima certe
quæ LUCANO objicias Philoso-
phiæ hujuscemodi sunt referenda :
Inde immodicus iste Ingenii tumor,
& ambitiosa Sententiarum ostenta-
tio, quam cum illa Hominum tur-
ba semper habet in Deliciis ; inde
quæ magna sunt, quam quæ bona
sunt, maluit præferre. Hinc etiam
in eximia illa Poeseos Virtute Passi-
onibus excitandis ipse (qui omnes
Philosophiæ Affectus tanquam illi-
citos existimavit) male successerat,
cujus Vitii unicum tantum (ut ta-
ceam cætera) Argumentum profe-
ram : Postquam in Pugna Pharsa-
lica CÆSAR de *Pompeio* Victoriâ
reportaverit, LUCANUS maxime
C 2 debuit

debuit, si aliquid ab ipsa Historia alienum protulisset, lugubri quodam Carmine immeritam doluisse POMPEII fortem; quippe in toto Opere summo habuit honore; vel saltem ipsum POMPEIUM (ut ingens patuit Doloris Argumentum) aut de amissa Romæ Libertate, aut de Amicorum Mortibus, aut de propriis querentem Infortuniis, introduxisse oportuit. Poeta tamen ab omni hujusmodi Dolo tam longe abest, ut POMPEIUM, obnixè hortaretur, postquam victus a Bello decesserat, ut CÆSARIS Victoris sui commiserescat, quia nempe CÆSAR non sine Scelere Victoria potitus est;

Nonne

*Nonne juvat pulsum bellis cessisse, nec
istud*

*Prospexisse (nefas!) spumantes cæde
catervas?*

*Respice turbatos in cursu sanguinis
amnes,*

*Et soceri miserere tui; Quo pectore
Romam*

Intrabit factus campis felicior istis?

Quis tulerit Poetam tam ridicule
philosophantem? quasi vero POM-
PEIUS Senex, Exul, Miser, Trium-
umphatus, ob Victorem suum
quamvis scelestum Commiseratio-
nem quandam conciperet: Illum
quidem maxime Stoice sapuisse o-
porterat

porterat, qui omnibus hisce Fortunæ Donis spoliatus, tantam in nuda Virtute poneret Felicitatem. Sed nullus Poetarum nisi VIRGILIUS hujusmodi afficiat Dolore: Alii plerunque dum mœrorem aliquem Lectoribus inducerent, in illo peccant, quod nimia Prolixitate sese in questus effundant, nec unquam satis Lachrymarum exhaustum esse sentiant, vel Ingenium, quod maxime possint, Versibus infundendo, faciunt ut magis Carmina miremur, quam materiam lugeamus. De utroque cavit VIRGILIUS, qui mera semper Simplicitate luctuosa ut in se sunt exhibuit; & leviter quicquid dolet perstrinxerat: “ Lamentati-
“ ones

“ ones enim, inquit CICERO, de-
“ bent esse breves & concisæ, quia
“ Lachryma subito exarescit, &
“ difficile est Auditorem aut Le-
“ ctorem in summo illo animi af-
“ fectu tenere.” Ut vero ad STA-
T I U M redeamus, illi quidem Spi-
ritus non raro feliciter assurgit, cui
dum temperare nequit, nescio quas
projicit Ampullas, & vana Carmi-
nibus addit Numerorum Terricula-
menta. T H E B A I D I S quidem
Argumentum Ingenii sui Truculen-
tiæ, sed non Heroico Poemati fa-
tis aptum videatur : E T E O C L E S
enim, P O L Y N I C E S, & T Y D E-
U S, quorum gesta hoc Carmine
celebrantur, nihil habent eorum, si

unicam Fortitudinem demas, quæ
conveniunt Heroibus : Imo in toto
Poemate nulla nisi Scelerum, qualia
sunt Parricidii, Perfidia, Immani-
tatis, Odiorum proferuntur Exem-
plaria ; dum in omnibus fere quos
suo Carmine induxit VIRGILIUS
præclara quædam illucescunt, & in
ipso ÆNEA summam Pietatem er-
ga Deos, Natum, Conjugem, A-
micos, & Parentem, Oculis sem-
per habemus subjectam. Epitheta ple-
runque STATIANA multum sonant
metaphorice, dum inanimatis illa
tribuuntur quæ Animalibus conve-
niunt. In Verbis tamen nec raro
sine maxima Elegantia Metaphoras
confectatur CLAUDIANUS; VIR-
GILIUS

LIUS in utrisque parcissimus ; STATIUS plurimas rerum similitudines composuit, multum sæpe de VIRGILII Ingenio referentes, in qua arte melius successerat LUCANUS, si aliquid unquam mediocre admi-
serat ; sed dum VIRGILIUS ad Apes, ad Formicas, & istiusmodi Natura ludicra descendit, nihil unquam nisi Quercum fulminatam, Terræ Exitium, aut Mundi Conflagrationem ebuccinat LUCANUS. Et hisce tandem, quorum alii non operæ Pretium duxerunt meminisse, de Heroicis Scriptoribus breviter perstrictis ; de Satyricis restat dicendum ; quorum omnium JUVENALIS & HORATIUS Pal-

mam dubiam quidem fecerunt: Inter Literatos enim multum discrepat, utrum mordax illa Ingenii acerbitas, qua suam armavit paginam JUVENALIS, an potius HORATII festivæ Irrisiones, magis Satyræ convenient: Ut vero de utroque rectius statuatur, pauca prius sunt advertenda. Ob infamem vitæ suæ lasciviam, etiam nunc temporis, male audit HORATIUS; Virtutem tamen semper rigide coluit JUVENALIS: Ille in absolutissima AUGUSTI Aula versatus est, hic in pessima DOMITIANI Tempora incidisset: Proinde ut ad sua & Sæculi utriusque Ingenia Opera accom-

accommodarent Poetæ, H O R A-
T I U S totus in ludicro exercetur
Argumento, nec Morum Licenti-
am, sed indecoras quasdam Auli-
corum Ineptias plerunque infecta-
tur; non ideo abfuisset quin irride-
tur, si aliqua Styli severitate ad le-
viuscula hujusmodi castiganda se
accinxisset: Gravissima tamen in
Temporibus suis reprehendit J U V E-
N A L I S, & de Vitiis ubique queri-
tur quæ vel pudeat recitare, & isti
fane Materiæ, summa Mentis Indig-
natio, Orationis Ardor, & Ingenii
Acrimonia, rectissime aptari videan-
tur. Quamvis ubi ad Jocularia A-
nimum demittit, non raro Satyris

Festivitatem fundit HORATIANAM. Uterque ideo (modo diversum confulas Argumentum) suo quidem Genere perfectissimus emicuit; in quo Ridiculum Acri melius, in hoc Acre Ridiculo. Reliqua certe HORATII Opera, Admiratione potius sunt digna quam Encomiis, nec majora solum Vituperatione, sed etiam Laude. Jam vero quod ad Dramaticos attinet, PLAUTI & TERENTII Argumenta, Sales, Elegantiae ubique adeo vulgantur, ut nihil de novo possit adjici: De SENECA vero tam diverse sentiunt, ut alii inter summos Tragicorum, alii infra Infimum annumerent:

Illi

Illi quidem Ingenium valde magnum, Oratio elegans & concisa, abundat Sententiis plerunque acutis, Stoicam semper Philosophiam, quam amplexus est, redolentibus. Unde omnibus fere, qui Artem Dramaticam parum sapiunt, semper est in Deliciis; si tamen ad hanc respicias, Tragoediæ ubique plurimum laborant, & istud vitii (ut reliqua prætermittam) SENECAE peculiare videatur, ut quoscunque inducat Interlocutores, nulla, ad Personas quas sustinet, habita ratione, eundem semper unicuique tribuat loquendi modum: Omnes severiora spirant Philosophiæ Dogmata, & quæ Stoæ
magis

magis convenient quam Theatro. Eadem semper Styli Magnificentia superbiunt Rex, & Nuncius: Imo ipsam Nutricem (plurima enim tam acute profert) Stoicorum Præceptis non mediocriter imbutam sentias. Inter Epigrammatistas potissimum emiculerunt MARTIALIS & CLAUDIANUS; Ille semper in extremo Poemate Ingenii subjecit acumen, & sæpe similia insequitur Verborum Tintinnabula; Hic per totum Epigramma suum dispergit Salem, & venustissima ubique utitur Latinitatis Elegancia. Cæterum tamen Poetarum Vulgus, de istiusmodi mediocribus sunt, quos nec Dii nec
Ho-

Homines concesserunt; & quamvis una aut altera apud affectatas CATULLI Oratiunculas, TIBULLI aut PROPERTII inhonestam paginam, & Carmina incuriosa, illucescat Virtus, non tamen est Operæ Pretium Gemmas inter Stercora eruere.

Jo. Addison, è Coll. Magd. Oxon.



Homines conlectum; & quam
vis una aut altera apud affectum
CATULLI Ornamentum, Tullii
aut ROBERTI inchoatam ex-
ginam, & Carmina inchoata, illa-
celat Virtus, non tamen est Opus
Primum Germanis inchoat
crucis.

32. ALPES, ECU. M. G. C. A.



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CHRISTOPHER HAYES, Esq;



L O N D O N,

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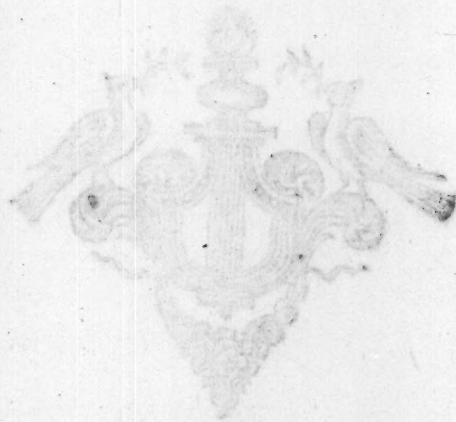
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OF all the Nations in the
World, the *Romans* have
most excell'd in the
Art of Poetry, and even
among the *Romans* VIRGIL has
been the most deservedly celebra-

ted; from whom the juſteſt Rules of this Art are rather to be taken, than from the dry Precepts of the Criticks. To the End therefore that we may the more truly aſcertain the *Beauties* and *Faults* which occur among the reſt of the Writers of *Heroic Poetry*, let us compare them with the Style of VIRGIL; who, if he be in any Thing deficient, it is when he has ſometimes in his *Eclogues* mingled ſuch a Purity of Style, as is not entirely agreeable with the Dialect of Shepherds; and frequently the Dignity of his Verſe ſeems no Way conſonant to the Rural Pipe. In every Book of his *Georgicks*, he

treats of *Country Affairs* with an inimitable Elegancy of Style ; but, above all, we are most delighted with his last Book, *Of the Nature of B E E S* ; where, in a Poem on so inconsiderable a Subject, our Author purposely affects a peculiarly solemn and pompous Style. In this Piece he compares the Labours of the B E E S to those of the *Cyclops* ; and in the same lofty Numbers recounts the Skirmishes of these little *Insects* among themselves, as he does the Rencounters of *ÆNEAS* and *T U R N U S*. All along, the Generals of this small Republick, the Populace, the Factions, the Customs and Forms of Government,

ment exercis'd within the narrow Limits of the *Bee-hive*, are describ'd with an inexpressible Beauty and Magnificence. Throughout the whole Work, what mostly raises our Admiration, is, that in the Pursuit of his Discourse on Planting, Grazing, and Agriculture, (waving the common Forms of Speech) he suits his Poetick Diction to so unpolite a Theme; how, seemingly depress'd with the Meanness of his Subject, he never sinks into a Plebeian Style; but the Force and Energy of his Expression are so conspicuous, that many, too rashly indeed, have not scrupled to prefer the *Georgicks* to the *Æneid*:

But

*Read these
Despatches &c.
in the
by the*

But in a Work of this Nature, no other Parts of Poetry could be display'd, except an Elegance of Style and Description: In both these Ways VIRGIL has this peculiar to himself, that he captivates the Soul with his wonderful Sweetness, and his Descriptions are as lively, as if we had the Object plac'd before our Eyes.

In the Purity of his Style next follows LUCRETIVS, whose Diction, allowing for his Obsolete-ness, and Numbers almost Prosa-ick, may challenge a Share of Praise in those who have any Taste of the *Roman Eloquence*: For De-
scriptions

scriptions however, the second Post of Honour is due to CLAUDIAN, who has throughout, in a most beautiful Style, interwoven his agreeable Images ; faulty in this alone, that he expatiates upon his Subjects beyond all Decency, and frequently gives us the same Thoughts, diversify'd only in Expression. In this Art CLAUDIAN well knew the Progress he had made, for on whatsoever Topick he is engag'd, he diligently searches out Matter for Description, nay most of the Subjects he has wrote upon are wholly such, as may be seen in his *Prefaces*, his *Eclogues*, his Books of the *Rape of PROSERPINE*,

PINE, his *Phœnix*, his *Porcupine*,
his *Cramp-Fish*, and most of his
EPIGRAMS.

OVID (like a true Courtier as he was) describes the Affairs of *Love* in neat and polite Verse. In the rest of his Works we meet with the more vulgar Way of Expression; for trusting to a good Genius, he was little solicitous about forming a more elaborate Style; but yet in his *Metamorphoses*, he has painted in the greatest Perfection the various *Changes* of all Creatures, and his *Transformations* succeed one another with a most surprizing Celerity.

STATIUS has frequently discharg'd both these Requisites of a Poet we just now observ'd; LUCAN neither, whose Diction, altho' very bombast, is not enliven'd either by beautiful Phrases or Epithets, but comes nearer Prose than Poetry; nay, there is in him commonly such a mean Choice of Words, as is sometimes even beneath Prose it self: And altho' he abounds in Descriptions, and is always making Excursions of that Kind, yet he seldom finishes his Work as he ought, or brings his Thoughts to any Justness of Conclusion.

But

But now as to STATIUS, he has given us Compositions worthy of the Envy of the best Poets: But with all his Beauties he has greater Faults; for in his Expression he makes too much Use of Gigantick Words, and, not considering his Subject, mingles uselefs Thunder in his Numbers: Nor is he less faulty in his Descriptions, for, encouraging too great a Heat, while he attempts to excel, he shoots beyond his Mark, and swells unnaturally. Of both which Extreames CLAUDIAN is too often guilty.

And now, since there have been many Pieces written, and those of Note, on the Subject of VIRGIL's *Æneis*, (and less Notice is taken of the Poetry of STATIUS and LUCAN) to whose Productions only the *Latines* allow the Title of *Epick Poetry*. As to LUCAN, it has been often disputed whether his *Pharsalia* be a proper Subject for an *Heroick Poem*. For the Decision of this Point, we must enquire into the true Nature of *Heroick Poetry*, which our Countryman the Lord BACON has admirably describ'd in his Treatise of *The Advancement of Learning*. From
whence

whence it is sufficiently manifest, that *History* and *Epic Poetry* are by no means proper Companions ; and therefore that LUCAN has very much fail'd in his principal Subject: The five Heroes who make the greatest Figure in his Poem, are CÆSAR, POMPEY, BRUTUS, CATO, and CICERO; each of them indeed as distinguishable in their Lives, as they were lamented at their Deaths; Men whose Virtues, allowing for the Frailties of human Nature, came nearest to that Pitch of Heroick Perfection which other Poets have falsely attributed to their Heroes. LUCAN every where rails at CÆSAR, and passionately

passionately espouses POMPEY's Interest, but most of all celebrates the Characters of BRUTUS and CATO for that Spirit of *Stoicism*, which he had equally imbib'd with them: And indeed most of the Faults objected to LUCAN, are rather to be imputed to this Kind of Philosophy. From whence sprung that boundless Vein of Wit, and that peculiar Affectation of a lofty Style, which, like that Sect of Men, he always delighted in, and therefore gives the Preference rather to great, than good Actions: And upon this Account, in raising the Passions, (that most excellent Part of Poetry) he succeeded but ill,

ill, because upon the Principles of his Philosophy, the Passions themselves were accounted as absolutely unlawful. To confirm this, (passing by many others) I will produce but one Instance : After CÆSAR had obtain'd the Victory over POMPEY in the Battle of *Pharsalia*, LUCAN certainly (if he had enlarg'd on any Circumstance foreign to his Story) should, upon so remarkable an Occasion, have brought in POMPEY lamenting his unhappy Fate in the most mournful Strain ; especially since he pays so high a Deference to him throughout his whole Work ; or at least (as there was an open Field for Grief) he

I

should

should have introduc'd POMPEY, either complaining of Rome's lost Liberty, the Death of his Friends, or his own Misfortunes. But LUCAN is so far from raising the Passions to this just Heighth, that he warmly advises POMPEY (when vanquish'd he retires from the Field of Action) to commiserate the Condition of his Conqueror CÆSAR, because he had not won the Day but by unjustifiable Methods.

*Don't you rejoyce that your superiour
Foes*

*Have snatch'd you from a Scene of
future Woes?*

Of

*That blest in Exile you escape the
Sight*

*Of bleeding Armies in domestic Fight ?
Behold each River drags her tardy
Flood,*

*Choak'd up with Carnage and distain'd
with Blood ;*

*Your Victor-Sire with pitying Eyes
survey,*

*Nor envy him the Fortune of the
Day :*

*How shall he enter Rome devoid of
Shame,*

*Who on the publick Ruins builds his
Name ?*

*Who can bear to hear the Poet
philosophizing in this ridiculous
G Man-*

Manner? As if POMPEY, a Man in Years, an Exile, Miserable, and Vanquish'd, should have any Concern upon him for the Crimes of his Conqueror: He ought to have been very much stoiciz'd indeed, who, despoil'd of all the Goods of Fortune, could place the Sum of his Felicity in meer naked Virtue. But none of the Poets have touch'd this Passion of *Grief* like VIRGIL. The Generality of other Writers, when they attempt to move their Readers, offend in this Point, that they are too prolix in spinning out their Complaints, and think their Flood of Tears inexhaustible; or else, while they labour to express
the

the Greatness of their Genius, in the Profuseness of their Verse, rather raise our Admiration at the Flowing of their Numbers, than excite our Pity in the Catastrophe of their Story. VIRGIL has carefully avoided both these Extreams, and dresses his Images of Sorrow in their native Simplicity; and whoever he makes to grieve, he always does it with a quick and tender Compassion: For according to CICERO, *our Expressions of Grief ought to be short and concise, because our Tears quickly dry up, and it is unnatural to detain either an Auditor or a Reader in too long a Suspension of Grief.*

But to return to STATIUS, his Spirit is indeed lofty and aspiring, to which while he gives too great a Loose, he runs into Bombast, and to his Poetry often adds useless sounding Words. The Subject of his *Thebais* seems indeed suited to the Barbarity of his Genius, but is beneath the Dignity of an Heroic Poem. For neither ETEOCLES, POLYNICES, nor TYDEUS, whose Actions are recorded in this Poem, have any Thing in them, except their Valour, agreeable to Heroes: Nay, throughout the whole Piece there are no Examples produc'd, unless of Persons infamous for the
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most flagitious Enormities, such as Parricide, Treachery, Cruelty, and Revenge; while, on the contrary, every Thing Praise-worthy shines bright in VIRGIL's Heroes, and in the Person of ÆNEAS we have plac'd before our Eyes an Instance of consummate Piety towards the GODS, his Son, his Wife, his Friends, and his Father. The Epithets of STATIUS are generally forc'd and very metaphorical, while such Properties are ascrib'd to Inanimates, as really only belong to Animals. In the Choice of his Words, and frequently in his Metaphors, he is follow'd by CLAUDIAN with the utmost Elegance;

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VIRGIL is sparing in both these Particulars; STATIUS abounds much with Similitudes, in which he seems to imitate VIRGIL; but in this Instance LUCAN had had better Success, if he had hit upon the proper Medium: But while VIRGIL stoops down to the humble Subjects of *Bees*, *Ants*, and other such like delightful Themes of Nature; on the other Hand, LUCAN bellows out nothing but Stories of *Oaks* split by Lightning, *Earthquakes*, and the World's *Conflagration*. Let this, in short, suffice observable concerning the Writers of Heroic Poetry, in itself new, and never before taken Notice of. Some-

Something now remains to be said of the *Satyrists*, among whom whether JUVENAL or HORACE have most Right to the *Bays*, it is difficult to determine ; for it has been long a Dispute among the Learned, whether that Keenneſs and Bitterneſs of Expreſſion with which JUVENAL has arm'd his *Satires*, or HORACE's more jocose *Lampoons* are moſt agreeable to the End of SATIRE. Now that we may give a clearer Deciſion on this Head, a few Things muſt be premis'd. HORACE bears to this Day, an ill Character for the Loofeneſs of his Conduct in Life. J U -

VENAL was a rigid Practiser of Virtue. The one was conversant in the most perfectly polite Court of AUGUSTUS; the other liv'd in the Dregs of DOMITIAN's Time; and therefore both these Poets accommodated their Writings to the Manners of the different Ages they liv'd in: For HORACE is entirely upon the ludicrous, and pursues not so much the Licentiousness of the Times, as the ridiculous Fopperies of some particular Courtiers; for had he attempted to correct these Trifles with Severity, he had not mis'd of being laugh'd at: But JUVENAL lashes the grossest Crimes prevalent in his Time, and complains

plaints of Enormities which he was ashamed to mention, and nothing less than the highest Resentment of Soul, Ardency of Expression, and Sharpness of Speech, could be an equal Match to Crimes so notorious; tho' whenever he descends to be *jocose*, we frequently meet with the Pleasantry of HORACE. Both of them, allowing for the different Manner of their Writing, are perfect Masters in their several Ways; in the one shines the *Ridicule*, in the other the *Severe*. The rest of HORACE's Pieces are so admirable, that they exceed our highest Encomiums, and are not only beyond our Dislike, but above our Praise.

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As to what concerns the Dramatic Poets, PLAUTUS and TERENCE bear away the Bell, whose Plots, Turns, and Elegancy of Style, are so well known, that nothing new can be said upon them.

As to SENECA, Mankind have had different Opinions of him ; some have rank'd him with the best Tragedians, others have sunk him below the worst. He certainly had a great Genius, an elegant and concise Way of Expression ; he abounds with smart Turns, which always favour much of that Stoicism of which he was a Follower, upon
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which Account he has always been esteem'd by those who have had little or no Taste of *Dramatick Poetry*; but then if we consider him as such, his Tragedies are throughout too elaborate; and this, to pass by his other Faults, seems peculiarly SENECA's, that he makes all his Actors (without any Regard to the Characters they bear) talk in the same Strain; all of them inculcate rigid philosophical *Dogmata*, and such Morality as is rather fit for the Schools of the Stoicks, than the *Roman Theatre*: For with him the King and the Slave strut in the same Buskin; nay, you may perceive the Nurse herself deeply

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ting'd with the Principles of Stoicism.

Among the *Epigrammatists*, MARTIAL and CLAUDIAN have bore the greatest Reputation ; the first, for the severe Point in the Close of his *Epigrams*, and the peculiar Jingle of his Words. The other, for dispersing the Poignancy of his Wit throughout his *Epigrams*, and that in the most beautiful *Latin* Phrase.

The rest of the Herd of the *Latin* Poets creep so low in their Numbers, that they are beneath the Notice either of GODS or Men : And tho' we may now and then dif-

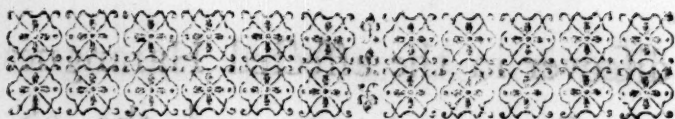
discover in the affected Harangues of CATULLUS, and the obscene Poetry of TIBULLUS and PROPERTIUS, some not disagreeable Pieces, yet it is not worth our while to rake the *Dunghills* for the Sake of the JEWELS.

ERRATA.

Page. 5 Lin. 16 read eosdemque. p. 13 l. 12 r. oportuerat.



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POSTSCRIPT.

The Passage of the Lord * BACON, which seems to be referr'd to by Mr. ADDISON, in the 9th Page of the foregoing DISSERTATION.

— de Poesi Narrativa, sive eam Heroicam appellare placet (modo hoc intelligas de Materia, non de Versu) ea a Fundamento prorsus nobili excitata videtur, quod ad dignitatem humanæ Naturæ imprimis spectat. Cum enim Mundus sensibilis sit Anima rationali dignitate inferior, videtur Poesis hæc humanæ Naturæ largiri, quæ Historia denegat; atque Animo umbris rerum utcunque satisfacere, cum solida haberi non possint. Si quis enim Rem acutius introspiciat, firmum ex Poesi sumitur argumentum, Magnitudinem Rerum magis illustrem, Ordinem magis perfectum, & Varietatem magis pulchram, Animæ humanæ complacere, quam in Natura ipsa post Lapsum reperire ullo modo possit. Quapropter, cum Res gestæ, & Eventus, qui vere Historiæ subjiuntur, non sint ejus Amplitudinis,

* Vide Tract. de Dignitate & Augmentis Scientiarum. Fol. Lond. 1638, Cap. XIII. Pag. 64.

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nis, in qua Anima humana sibi satisfaciatur, præsto est Poesis, quæ Facta magis Heroica confingat: Cum Historia vera successus rerum, minime pro meritis Virtutum & Scelerum narret; corrigit eam Poesis, & exitus, & fortunas secundum merita, & ex lege Nemeseos exhibet: Cum Historia vera, obvia rerum satietate & similitudine, animæ humanæ fastidio sit; reficit eam Poesis inexpectata & varia, & vicissitudinem plena canens. Adeo ut Poesis ista, non solum ad delectationem, sed etiam ad Animi magnitudinem, & ad Mores conferat. Quare & merito etiam Divinitatis cujuscumque particeps videri possit; quia animum erigit, & in sublime rapit: rerum simulachra ad animi desideria accommodando, non animum rebus (quod ratio facit & Historia) submittendo.

*Thus translated, in the English Edition,
by Dr. RAWLEY.*

As for *Narrative Poesy*, or, if you please, *Heroical*, (so you understand it of the Matter, not of the Verse) it seems to be rais'd altogether from a noble Foundation, which makes much for the Dignity of Man's Nature. For seeing this sensible World is in Dignity inferior to the Soul of Man, *Poesy* seems to endow human Nature with that which *History* denies; and to give Satisfaction to the Mind, with, at least, the Shadow of Things, where the Substance cannot be had. For if the Matter be thoroughly consider'd, a strong Argument

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ment may be drawn from *Poesy*, that a more stately Greatness of Things, a more perfect Order, and a more beautiful Variety delights the Soul of Man, than any Way can be found in Nature since the *Fall*. Wherefore, seeing the Acts and Events which are the Subject of true *History*, are not of that Amplitude as to content the Mind of Man, *Poesy* is ready at Hand to feign Acts more *Heroical*: Because true *History* reports the Successes of Business not proportionable to the Merit of Virtues and Vices, *Poesy* corrects it, and presents Events and Fortunes according to Desert, and according to the Law of Providence: Because true *History*, thro' the frequent Satiety and Similitude of Things, works a Distaste and Misprision in the Mind of Man; *Poesy* cheereth and refresheth the Soul, chanting Things rare, and various, and full of Vicissitudes. So as *Poesy* serveth and conferreth to Delectation, Magnanimity, and Morality; and therefore it may seem deservedly to have some Participation of Divineness, because it doth raise the Mind to Things, as *Reason* and *History* do.

F I N I S.